

What Is Claimed Is:

1           1. A method for providing a shared window for entering commands  
2 into a local computer system, wherein the shared window can be shared with a  
3 remote user who can input data into the shared window from a remote computer  
4 system subject to access control, the method comprising:

5           receiving a command from the remote user on the remote computer  
6 system;

7           wherein the command is directed toward the local computer system in  
8 order to operate the local computer system;

9           passing the command through a filtering process;

10          if the command passes the filtering process, executing the command on the  
11 local computer system;

12          displaying the command on the shared window on the local computer  
13 system so that a local user can view the command; and

14          allowing the command to be displayed on a remote copy of the shared  
15 window on the remote computer system, so that the remote user can view the  
16 command.

1           2. The method of claim 1, wherein if the shared window is in an  
2 approval mode, the filtering process involves:

3           allowing the local user of the local computer system to approve the  
4 command; and

5           if the local user approves the command, allowing the command to pass the  
6 filtering process.

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1           3.     The method of claim 1, further comprising if the shared window is  
2     in a view-only mode, allowing no commands received from the remote user to  
3     pass the filtering process.

1           4.     The method of claim 1, further comprising if the shared window is  
2     in an execute mode, allowing all commands received from the remote user to pass  
3     the filtering process.

1           5.     The method of claim 1, further comprising if the shared window is  
2     in a safe command mode, allowing commands from a pre-specified list of safe  
3     commands to pass the filtering process.

1           6.     The method of claim 5, further comprising, if the shared window is  
2     in a safe command mode and the command is not from the pre-specified list of  
3     safe commands:

4                 allowing the local user of the local computer system to approve the  
5     command; and

6                 if the local user approves the command, allowing the command to pass the  
7     filtering process.

1           7.     The method of claim 1, wherein commands from different users  
2     appear in different colors on the shared window.

1           8.     The method of claim 1, wherein allowing the command to be  
2     displayed on the remote copy of the shared window on the remote computer  
3     system involves sending an update for the shared window from the local computer  
4     system to the remote computer system, wherein the update includes the command.

1           9.       The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving a second  
2       command from a second remote user on a second remote computer system.

1           10.      The method of claim 1, wherein the filtering process takes place on  
2       at least one of:  
3                 the remote computer system;  
4                 the local computer system; and  
5                 a shared server that is separate from the remote computer system and the  
6       local computer system.

1           11.      The method of claim 1, wherein the command is in the form of  
2       character input.

1           12.      The method of claim 1, wherein the command is in the form of an  
2       action applied to a graphical user interface.

1           13.      A computer-readable storage medium storing instructions that  
2       when executed by a computer cause the computer to perform a method for  
3       providing a shared window for entering commands into a local computer system,  
4       wherein the shared window can be shared with a remote user who can input data  
5       into the shared window from a remote computer system subject to access control,  
6       the method comprising:  
7                 receiving a command from the remote user on the remote computer  
8       system;  
9                 wherein the command is directed toward the local computer system in  
10      order to operate the local computer system;

11                   passing the command through a filtering process;  
12                   if the command passes the filtering process, executing the command on the  
13       local computer system;  
14                   displaying the command on the shared window on the local computer  
15       system so that a local user can view the command; and  
16                   allowing the command to be displayed on a remote copy of the shared  
17       window on the remote computer system, so that the remote user can view the  
18       command.

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1                  14.     The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein if the  
2       shared window is in an approval mode, the filtering process involves:  
3                   allowing the local user of the local computer system to approve the  
4       command; and  
5                   if the local user approves the command, allowing the command to pass the  
6       filtering process.

1                  15.     The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein if the  
2       shared window is in a view-only mode, no commands received from the remote  
3       user are allowed to pass the filtering process.

1                  16.     The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein if the  
2       shared window is in an execute mode, all commands received from the remote  
3       user are allowed to pass the filtering process

1                  17.     The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein if the  
2       shared window is in a safe command mode, commands from a pre-specified list of  
3       safe commands are allowed to pass the filtering process.

1           18. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 17, wherein if the  
2 shared window is in a safe command mode and the command is not from the pre-  
3 specified list of safe commands, the method further comprises:

4                 allowing the local user of the local computer system to approve the  
5 command; and

6                 if the local user approves the command, allowing the command to pass the  
7 filtering process.

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1           19. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein  
2 commands from different users appear in different colors on the shared window.

1           20. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein  
2 allowing the command to be displayed on the remote copy of the shared window  
3 on the remote computer system involves sending an update for the shared window  
4 from the local computer system to the remote computer system, wherein the  
5 update includes the command.

1           21. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the  
2 method further comprises receiving a second command from a second remote user  
3 on a second remote computer system.

1           22. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the  
2 filtering process takes place on at least one of:  
3                 the remote computer system;  
4                 the local computer system; and

5           a shared server that is separate from the remote computer system and the  
6 local computer system.

1           23.    The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the  
2 command is in the form of character input.

1           24.    The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the  
2 command is in the form of an action applied to a graphical user interface.

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1           25.    An apparatus that provides a shared window for entering  
2 commands into a local computer system, wherein the shared window can be  
3 shared with a remote user who can input data into the shared window from a  
4 remote computer system subject to access control, the apparatus comprising:

5           a receiving mechanism that is configured to receive a command from the  
6 remote user on the remote computer system;

7           wherein the command is directed toward the local computer system in  
8 order to operate the local computer system;

9           a filtering mechanism that is configured to pass the command through a  
10 filtering process, and to execute the command on the local computer system if the  
11 command passes the filtering process; and

12          a display mechanism that is configured to display the command on the  
13 shared window on the local computer system so that a local user can view the  
14 command;

15          wherein the display mechanism is configured to allow the command to be  
16 displayed on a remote copy of the shared window on the remote computer system,  
17 so that the remote user can view the command.

1           26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein if the shared window is in an  
2 approval mode, the filtering mechanism is configured to:  
3                 allow the local user of the local computer system to approve the command;  
4 and to  
5                 allow the command to pass the filtering process if the local user approves  
6 the command.

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1           27. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein if the shared window is in a  
2 view-only mode, no commands received from the remote user are allowed to pass  
3 the filtering process.

1           28. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein if the shared window is in an  
2 execute mode, all commands received from the remote user are allowed to pass  
3 the filtering process.

1           29. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein if the shared window is in a  
2 safe command mode, commands from a pre-specified list of safe commands are  
3 allowed to pass the filtering process.

1           30. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein if the shared window is in a  
2 safe command mode and the command is not from the pre-specified list of safe  
3 commands, the filtering mechanism is configured to:  
4                 allow the local user of the local computer system to approve the command;  
5 and  
6                 allow the command to pass the filtering process if the local user approves  
7 the command.

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1       31. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the display mechanism is  
2 configured to display commands from different users in different colors on the  
3 shared window.

1       32. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the display mechanism is  
2 configured to send an update for the shared window from the local computer  
3 system to the remote computer system, wherein the update includes the command.

1       33. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the receiving mechanism is  
2 configured to receive a second command from a second remote user on a second  
3 remote computer system.

1       34. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the filtering mechanism is  
2 located on at least one of:  
3           the remote computer system;  
4           the local computer system; and  
5           a shared server that is separate from the remote computer system and the  
6 local computer system.

1       35. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the command is in the form of  
2 character input.

1       36. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the command is in the form of  
2 an action applied to a graphical user interface.